

The Early Modern Muslim Empires


Chapter 21 Review

Not the First Muslim Empires

- Muhammad united most of Arabia.
- Umayyad Empire (dominated by Arab Muslims)
- Abbasid Empire (dominated by Arab Muslims)

These were single entities; no Muslim rivals

Three Different Muslim Empires

- Ottomans
 - Safavids
 - Mughals
- 
- Descended from
Central Asian, Turkic-
speaking nomads

So how is this different from the Umayyad and Abbasid?

Key Themes

- What conditions allowed the empires to form
- New, “modern” armies
- Political patterns
- Economic activity
- Religious tolerance AND religious conflict
- Consequences for ignoring the non-Muslim world
- Distinctive art and architecture

The Three Muslim Empires

- The Ottomans
 - Anatolia, Mesopotamia, North Africa, Arabia, Balkans
- The Safavids
 - Persian heartland (modern-day Iran)
- The Mughals
 - Indian Sub-continent (modern-day Pakistan, India, Bangladesh)

Ottoman Origins

- Turkic nomads pushed by Mongols
 - Like Huns pushing Goths
- Refugees and Mongol pressure break Seljuk Turkic Rum
- Decline of Mongols=new opportunities
 - Political vacuum
 - Warring clans
- Osman's clan seizes control in Anatolia

Ottoman Expansion



Constantinople Falls



Mehmed II's 100,000



Breaking Through



Bad News



Sultans

- Absolute monarchs (in theory)
 - But like all such offices, dependent upon others
 - Seems to work for great men, but average or bad...
 - A monarch is only as powerful as his supporters and administration.
- Reliant upon others for administration and power.
 - warrior aristocracy (compare to Rome, Russia, etc.)
 - janissary corps (compare to any military state)
 - religious scholars/clerics (compare to Catholic Europe)
 - legal experts (bureaucrats—compare to Iberians)
- Who are some important Ottoman Sultans?

The Problem With Absolute Monarchs

- Sultans grew out of touch
 - Too much wealth and splendor
 - Too much trust in administrative support
 - Concubines, alcohol, opium
- First Sultans:
 - *led* men into battle
 - were politically active in administration
- Later Sultans:
 - *sent* men into battle.
 - delegated day-to-day administration to viziers.
- Problems of succession
 - Unclear rules in ALL Islamic states
 - Constant threat of civil war

Ottoman Warriors

- Early Sultans were military leaders first.
- Economy based upon warfare, expansion, and trade
- Warrior aristocracy=Turkic cavalry
 - Rule provinces in annexed areas
 - Rewarded with territory
 - Connection to Russian nobles and Encomiendas
- Vie for power against clerics and bureaucrats
 - Lose prestige when Janissaries rise
 - End up focusing on own lands, often competing for power with Sultans

Janissaries

- Ottoman riflemen and artillery
- Mostly conscripted from Balkans
- Become most powerful part of military
- Replace Warrior Aristocracy; can control Sultan
- Extreme conservatism; resist change.

People of the Book (Dhimmi)

- Jews and Christians
 - Respected and protected by Mohammad
 - Remember that Islam embraces its Judeo-Christian roots
- Essential to Ottoman commerce
 - Who better to trade with Christian Europe?
- Sultans obliged to protect them.
- Had to pay a protection tax (“Jizzia”)
- Question: Why do many Muslims view the Dhimmi as enemies today? (By the way, you can reverse that!)

Istanbul (Not Constantinople)

- Conquered by Mehmed II's forces (1453)
 - Sacked, partially razed, but rebuilt (unlike Carthage)
- Important strategic location
- Spans two continents

Ottoman Architecture

- Adoption of Byzantine styles, but a twist
 - Bells, statues (idols!), altars, etc. removed.
 - Mosaics whitewashed.
 - Byzantine architecture modified.
- Domes and minarets...

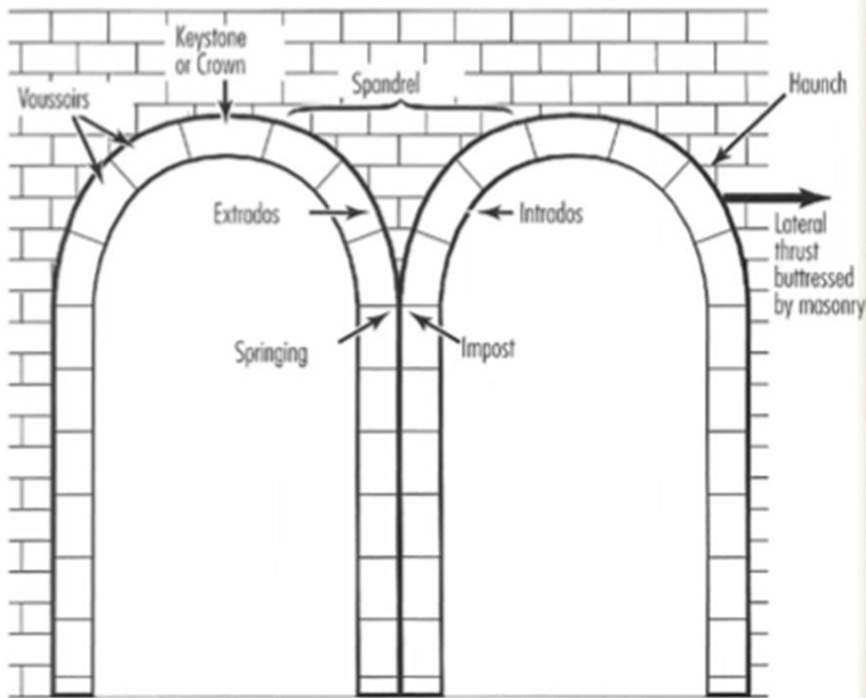
Hagia Sophia (Ayasofya)

- Formerly a Byzantine Cathedral
 - Central dome
 - Arched entryway
- Ottoman additions
 - Minarets
 - Mihrab (qibla wall)
 - Minbar



Remember Domes?

- Based upon the Roman arch and barrel vault

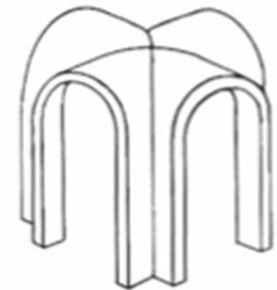


Vaulting Ambition

ARCH. The basic building block of Roman architecture was the arch, which revolutionized the practice of architecture. Stone voussoirs shaped like wedges were supported by a wood framework called centering, removed after the keystone was in place.

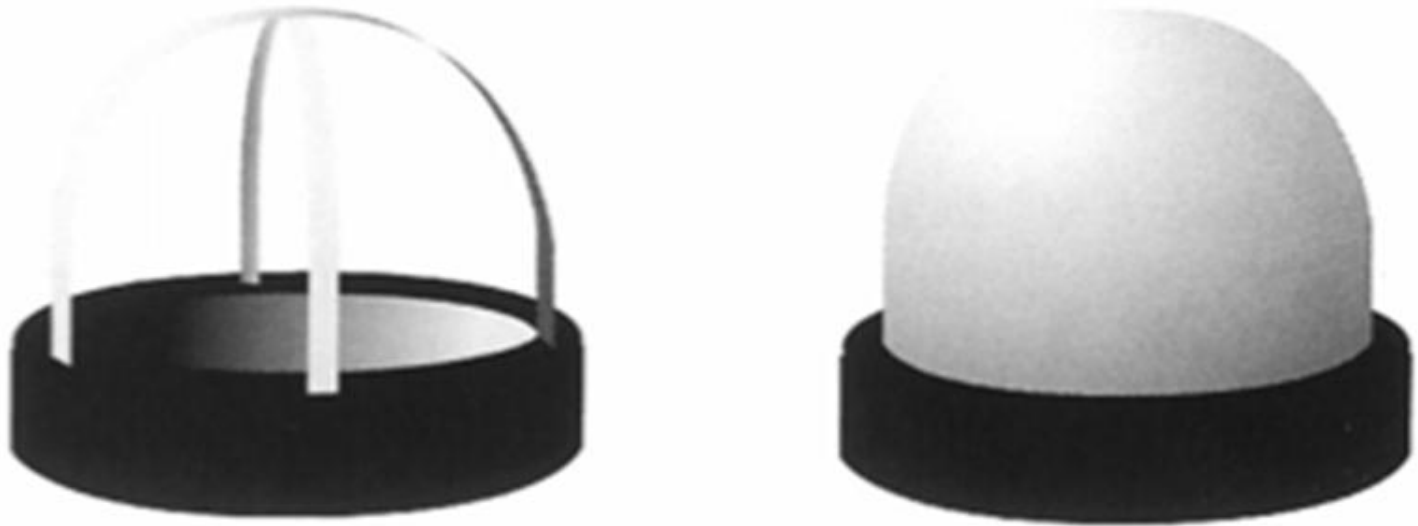


BARREL VAULT



GROIN VAULT

Voila! (a dome)

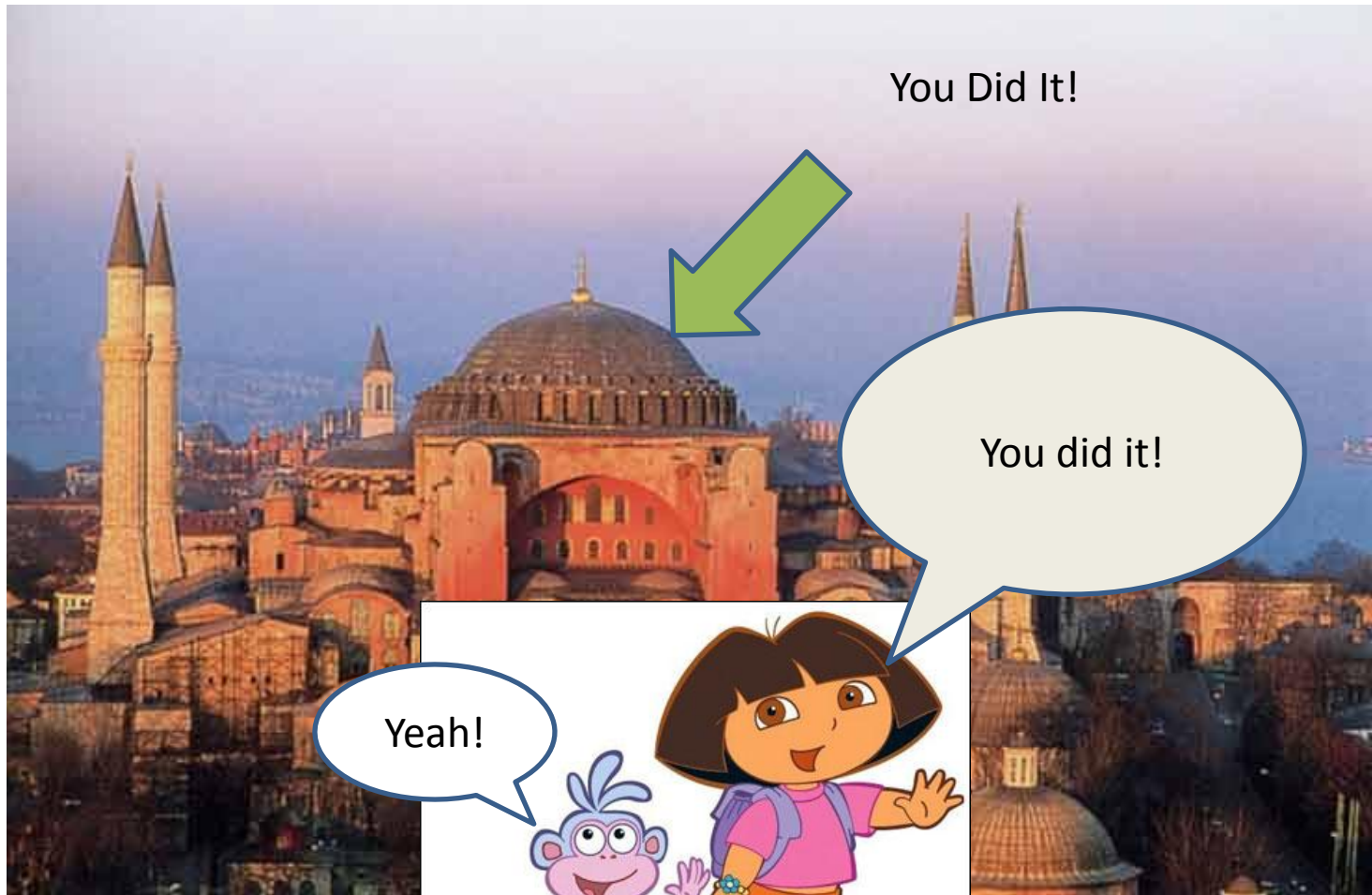


DOME. An arch rotated in a circle generates a dome.

Dome Frame (from below)



Domes

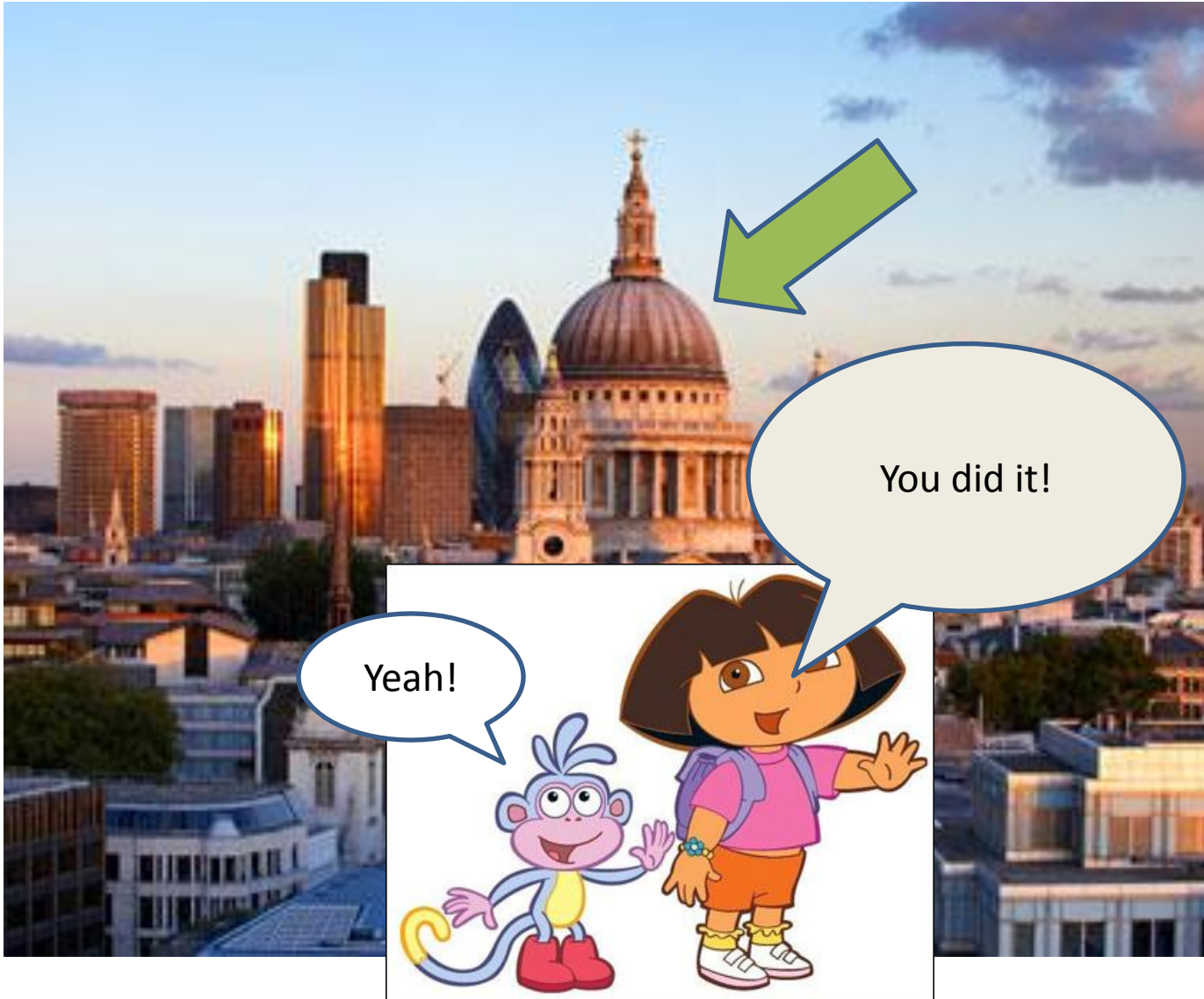


You Did It!

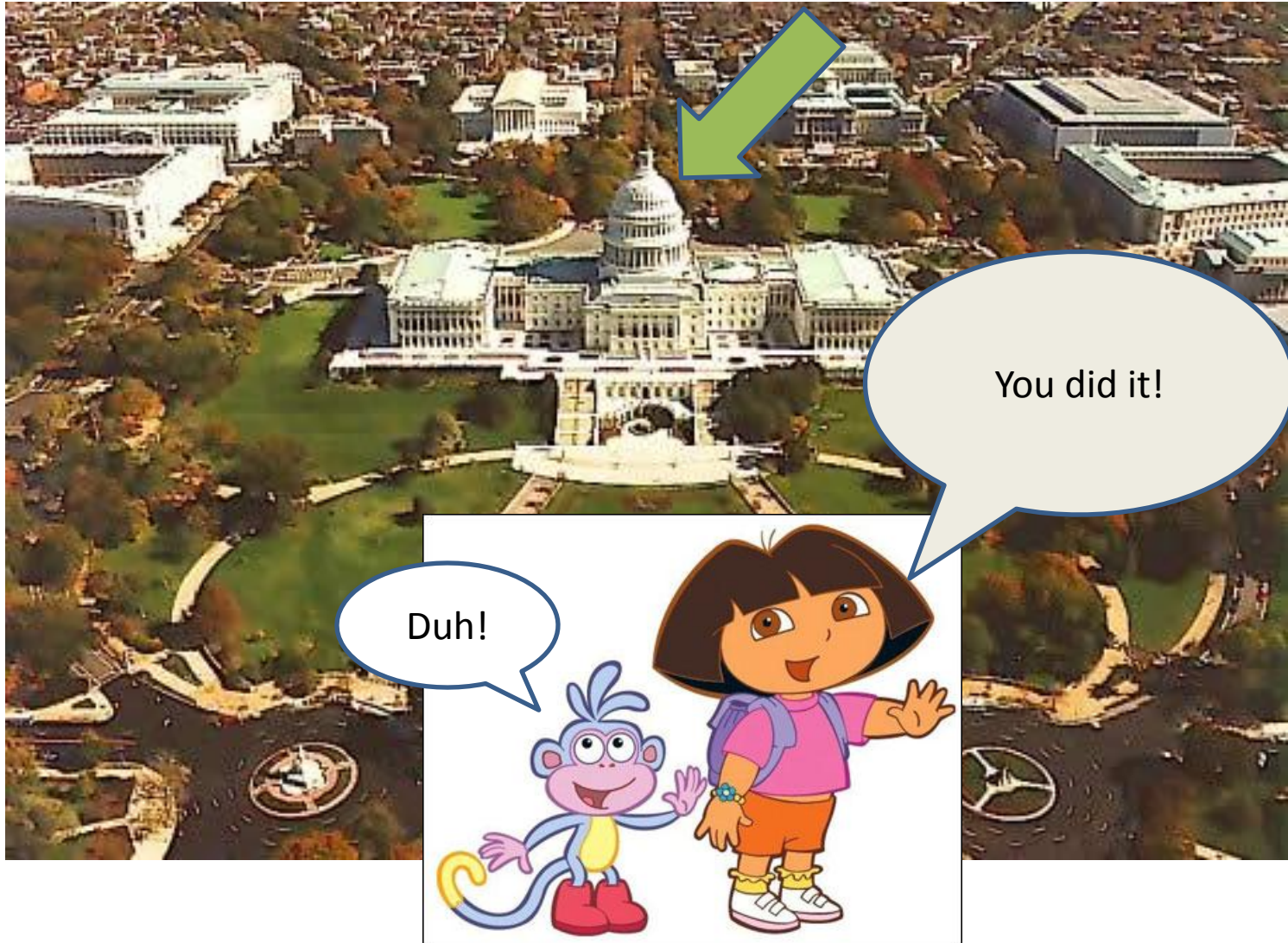
You did it!

Yeah!

Domes



Domes



Domes



So bored!



You did it!

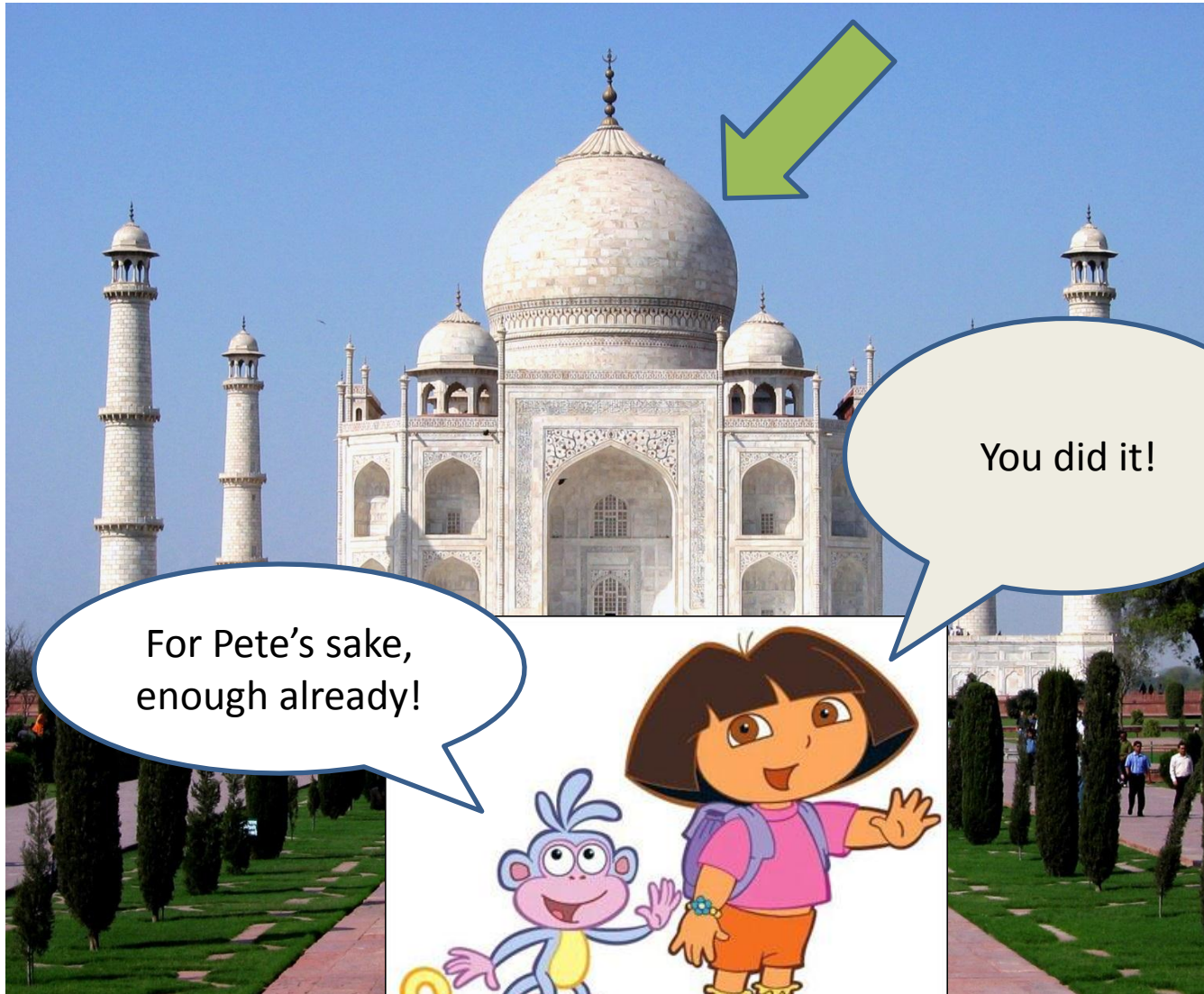
Domes



These domes
make me cry!



Domes



For Pete's sake,
enough already!

You did it!

Domes



I honestly expected a Battaglia joke!

You did it!

Minarets

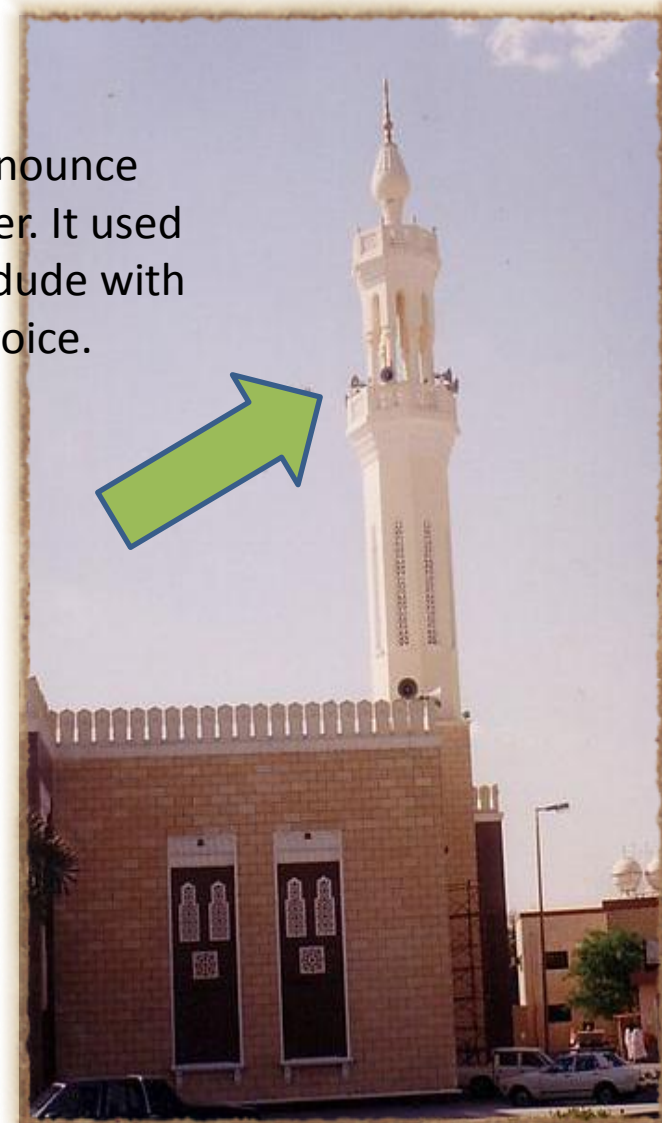
- Origin from Arabic word for “lighthouse”

Speakers announce calls to prayer. It used to be just a dude with a booming voice.

- Literal and symbolic meaning?
 - Focal point (function of height)

- Used to
 - announce calls to prayer (Muezzin=crier)
 - Locate mosques from afar

- More minarets=more prestige



Ottoman Minarets

- Distinctive from others
 - Thin
 - Pencil-tip top
 - More like a spire than a lighthouse.



Which One Is NOT a Minaret?



Yeah, dude, that's an obelisk!
Sooo Chapter 1, man.

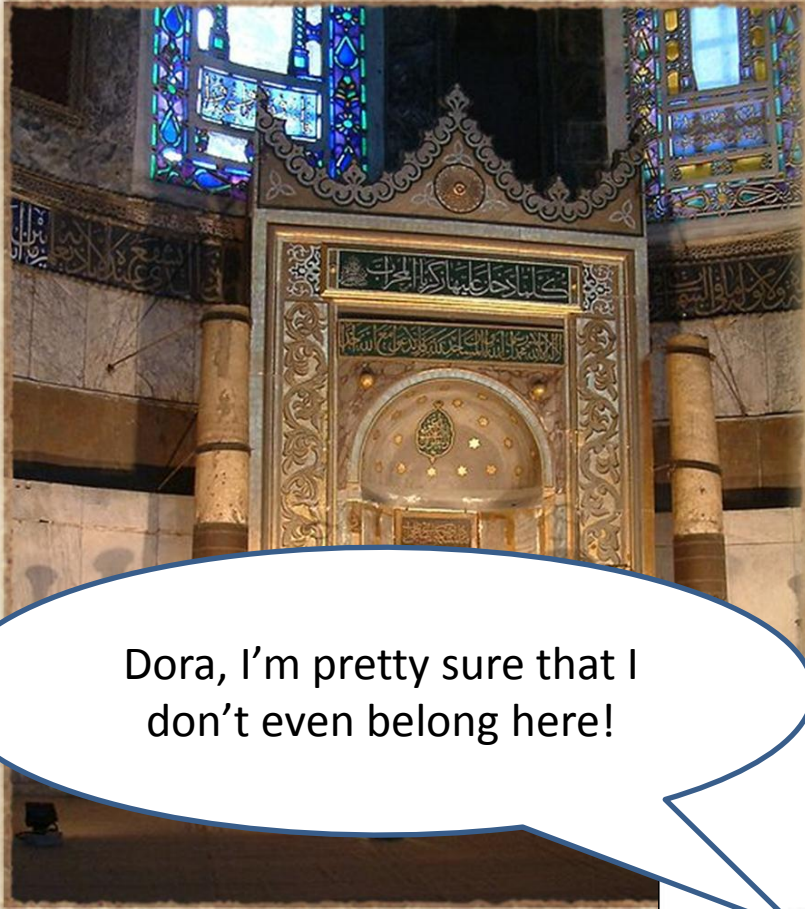


Ahem, a lighthouse...

You did it!



Mihrab (Quibla Wall)



Dora, I'm pretty sure that I don't even belong here!

Mihrabs help Muslims pray toward Mecca!



Minbar



إسوير، لا الضرب

Mr. Imam, please tell Swiper "No Swiping!"

I'm gonna kill that stinkin' fox.



Which is the Ottoman Mosque?



Why Not?

Which is the Ottoman Mosque?



Art and Architecture as Prestige

- Kings vie against Kings, past, present, and future.
- Henry VIII "steals" Hampton Court.
- Versailles
- What happened to St. Basil's architect?

Ottoman Economy

- Initially based upon war (looting), expansion and the tribute (taxes) that came from it.
- Trade
 - Advantage with Dhimmis.
 - The role of bazaars--cosmopolitan with goods from throughout the globe.
 - Diminished much by European advances.
- Of course typical peasant and labor work as well.

Ottoman Society

- Sultan
- Warrior Aristocracy (at first--I get the feeling they declined) and high-level bureaucrats and clerics
- Merchants and artisans (regulated by guilds, as in Europe)
- Laborers, peasants
- Slaves? (Yes, but...)

What's in a Language?

- Early Ottomans wrote in Persian
- Arabic had a special place.
- Turkish preferred for administration, poetry, and history.
- Why?

Ottoman Decline

- By 18th Century, they were called "The Sick Man" amongst empires.
- Still, endured for 600+ years beset by powerful enemies on multiple fronts.

Ottoman Decline

- Internal conflicts:
 - Sultan v. Rivals;
 - problems of succession
 - corruption wrecks administration and promotes incompetence
 - peasant uprisings
 - general loss of vitality amongst Sultans who no longer led armies but instead preferred lives of pleasure--see Rome and pretty much any empire!
- External conflicts: the West gets stronger. Russia, Spain, Austria; and much of the while Safavids to the East.
- Problem of having an economy based upon expansion, then expanding "A bridge too far."
- The West gets rich in the New World, and the influx of gold and especially silver bullion helped kick off an inflationary period. That's odd but explainable. Usually gold and silver based economies lack inflation, but... (it's all about scarcity)

Ottoman Decline: The Navy

- The Ottoman navy had dominated the Mediterranean.
- North Africa conquered, major islands taken, Venice and Genoa on the ropes...
- BUT the Spanish and Venitians beat the living Hades out of the Ottoman fleet at the battle of Lepanto (1571).
- Portuguese advances on India disrupted trade. The Ottomans took too long to recognize the new threats posed by the West.

Ottoman Decline: Janissaries

- Janissaries important in building the empire.
- Fought sternly to prevent any changes or innovations that might threaten their status.
- Thus, as others advance, the Ottomans do not.

Ottoman Decline: Nail in the Coffin

- Ottomans, like Arabs and others in the East, were preconditioned to assume that what happened in Europe was of no matter.
- European advances in technology: ignored.
- European power through the advent of the nation-state: ignored.
- The idea that "infidels" could outmatch them: ignored (until it was too late).

The Safavid

- Turkic in origin, like Ottomans
- Forged in the decades of the Mongol decline, like Ottomans
- Militant strain of Islam, like the Ottomans
- Shi'a, Sunni, what's the diff? (asks the ignoramus)

Sunni-Shi'a Spilt

(and other lessons in alliteration)

- Matter of succession, political and religious
- Issue of who was Muhammad's legitimate successor.
- Eventual differences in doctrine, ritual, and law. Compare to Orthodox v. Catholic (and Protestant sects, for that matter)
- These divisions exist to this day.

The Safavid

- Shah Tahmasp I wins throne after succession turmoil.
- Shi'a, descended from Sufi mystics.
- Sought to purify and spread Islam amongst Turkic peoples.

Politics and War Under Safavid Shahs

- Tahmasp and successors bring Turkic chieftains under control by making them into a warrior nobility.
 - Turkic warriors assigned villages and peasant labor (Encomiendas?)
 - The chieftains occasionally threatened the Shah's power.
- Persians appointed to high level administrative position to counter balance Turkic threat.
- Like Ottomans, a slave-army (captured Russian boys) rises to complicate matters.
 - Use of firearms
 - Trained by Europeans!
- Defeat at Battle of Chaldiran (1514) halted much the spread of a Shi'a Empire.

Safavid State and Religion

- Significance of Persian
 - State language after Chaldiran
 - Court etiquette
- Militant Shi'a ideology modified by Persian bureaucracy
- Red hats?
- Religious teachers supported by state schools
- Unlike Ottoman and Mughal Empire, mostly unified by religion.

Safavid Splendor & Economic Initiative

- Abbas I tried to make the empire a center of
 - international trade
 - Islamic culture
- Special attention to building projects.
- Infrastructure improvements to promote
 - Workshops for silk, textiles, carpets
 - Trade with other Muslims, Indians, Chinese, and Europeans
 - But less market-oriented than Ottomans

Gender Issues

- Women at a social disadvantage.
- Subordinate to fathers and husbands
 - Especially amongst the elite
 - Why not amongst the commoners?
- Is this a cultural or religious issue?

Rapid Decline of the Safavid

- Abbas I feared rivals
 - Quite paranoid (why?)
 - Removed heirs
- Grandson weak. Weak Shah, quick decline.
- Internal strife; external invasions
- Conquered by Afghani invaders (1772)
 - Nadir Khan Afshar unable to restore power.

The Mughals

- Also Turkic.
- Led by Babur, invaded India (1526)
- Initially out for booty, not conquest.
- Babur's military tactics & technology (similar to Ottomans).
 - Defeats Muslim Lodi Dynasty (Panipat, 1526)
 - Defeats Hindu confederation (Khanua, 1527)

Babur

- Great Warrior
- Loved art, poetry, and music
- Sucked bad at administration; death in 1530 causes invasions, collapse, but recovery by Humayan

Akbar

- Succeeded Humayan.
- Defeats neighboring rivals.
- Talented administrator and general.
- Sought to reconcile Islam with Hinduism.
 - Encouraged intermarriage
 - Abolished head taxes
 - Protected Hindu nobles who were loyal
 - Respected Hindu religious customs
 - Promoted a religious syncretism that combined Muslim and Hindu beliefs...
 - FAIL!

Mughal Social Reforms and Change

- Regulate consumption of alcohol
- Improve position of women (v. Hindu customs)
 - Special market days for women
 - Encouraged widow remarriage; prohibited Sati
 - Discouraged child marriage
- Akbar able because he was charismatic, but others...

Mughal Economy

- Majority impoverished
- Falls quickly behind Europe in science and invention
- But cotton textiles were the best in the world.
 - Remember the Outsiders? “Madras” shirts?

Mughal Art

- Shahs Jahngir and Jahan promote the good life over expansion
 - Follow Akbar's tolerance of Hindus
 - Painting workshops for miniatures
 - Taj Majal
 - Blending of Persian and Hindu traditions

Women in the Mughal Empire

- Life of women in court improved
 - Jahangir and Jahan ignore much of politics
 - allows wives to gain influence
 - Nur Jahan (Janhir's wife) and Mumtaz Mahal (Jahan's wife) dominant
- Life of common women declined.
 - Child marriage rises
 - Widow remarriage dies out
 - Sati spreads in the upper classes
 - Lack of opportunity+burden of a dowry=girls not cool

Mughal Decline

- Aurangzeb (Jahan's successor) promotes to foolish ambitions:
 - Control all of India
 - Rid Islam of Hindu influences
- Most of India conquered, but at a high cost to the treasury, bureaucracy, and military
- More internal revolts (Indian regionalism)
- Hindus kept from high offices and oppressed (way to alienate the majority!)
 - Head tax restored
 - Hindu religious practices assailed
- Rise of Marattas (western India) and Sikhs (Northwest) weakens the state
- Power returns to regional lords who will be overcome by Europeans (i.e. British)

Why It Matters

- Internal conflicts plagued the Muslim Empires, but all three governments
 - ignored European threats
 - declined to adapt European technology
 - stood powerless while Europeans hijacked trade
- What role did Muslim clerics have in this trend, and how does it relate to future political difficulties for Islam?